DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 152 744 SP 012 516

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TITLE Teachers, Professionalism, and Teacher Training.
PUB DATE 29 Mar 78
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Toronto, Ontario, Canada, March 27-31, 1978) ; Best copy available

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Needs; Graduate Study; Higher Education; Internship Programs; *Professional Recognition; *Professional Training; Teacher Centers; *Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS *Professional Autonomy

ABSTRACT

Changes for the structuring of teacher education are proposed in this paper. The professional status of teachers is emphasized, and the following aspects in teacher training are outlined: (1) In order to provide for professional autonomy and to give practicing teachers more control over their profession, states should establish professional practice boards for teachers made up of practicing teachers from elementary and secondary classrooms. These boards would set standards for teacher training and for entry into the profession; (2) Following undergraduate work, a rigorous graduate program in professional teacher training should be established. The content of such a program would include the technical knowledge base of the science and art of teaching as determined by the profession and teacher educators; (3) An integral part of the graduate professional training would be a paid internship program lasting at least one year with a partial or full teaching load under the guidance of a practicing teacher; (4) Upon entry into the profession, the teacher would be supported in the profession by a comprehensive network of practitioner-operated teacher centers. (JD)

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TEACHERS, PROFESSIONALISM, AND TEACHER TRAINING

by

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For Presentation at the
Annual Meeting
American Educational Research Association
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Session 14.06
"In-Service Education: Theory, Practice, and Policy"
(Symposium, Division B)

March 29, 1978

Printed in the U.S.A.

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It has become common to hear teachers denigrate the quality of traditional programs of in-service education. Teachers say that local school district in-service education programs do not meet teacher needs, are of poor overall quality, and are underfunded. Most teachers feel that current district in-service programs are irrelevant to the teachers' job of teaching. Teachers likewise say that in-service education courses taught at nearby colleges and universities for practicing teachers are no better. The collective wisdom of those in the classrooms of our nation is that the entire area of in-service education is one vast wasteland.

At the same time there are a multitude of voices from the teaching ranks clamoring for more and better in-service education. Teachers worked hard for federal teacher center legislation and are working even harder to make the teacher center program a success. Teachers in many areas are organizing and offering in-service programs for fellow teachers through their teacher unions. In faculty rooms and at teacher meetings, one can actually hear teachers debating the merits of internships, laboratory schools, pre-service teacher training, and the like.

While teachers may be critical of current or past in-service education efforts, they have positive attitudes toward an improved in-service education. Teachers see a clearly defined need and view various forms of in-service education as a way of satisfying those needs.

Teachers also do not see in-service education an an isolated process. Teachers are often as critical of their pre-service training as they are of their in-service experiences, and are interested in a reform or improvement of all of teacher training. Teachers welcome debate on the topic and want to see changes.

This is certainly a phenomenon that bears further examination and attention. It can be understood and explained in the context of the struggle for professionalization of teaching.

Teachers and Professionalism

One can go back to 1845 to hear the founders of the New York State Teachers Association, in the first constitution of that organization, assert that teaching is a profession deserving of dignity (Hodge and Hodge, 1945). Warehouses could probably be filled with the literature written over the past hundred years or more on teaching as a profession.

While teachers in all periods of our national history have been quick to affirm that teaching is a profession, the concept has had difficulty attaining credence from those outside of teaching.

One of the difficulties in establishing teaching as a profession has been the complex and diverse set of goals for education. Formalized lists of educational goals abound, but there has never been any consensus on what education should be achieving. State and federal policies often present conflicting sets of goals. The current, and often acrimonious, debates over basic skills instruction, minimal competency tests, remedial instruction, compensatory programs, and similar issues illustrate this point. The goals of education are difficult to define, except on a very general and rhetorical level. Such an ambigous situation creates an environment whereby society makes so many demands on teachers and has so many disparate expectations of schools that teachers and schools will inevitably be found lacking by various elements within society no matter what their performance (Good 1975). This has certainly been an impediment

to recognition by society that teaching is a profession. Coupled with this is the fact that there is a lack of clear understanding of what a profession really is.

The Attributes of Professionalism

Central to the discussion is the question of what constitutes a profession. Robert Dreeben, in his book The Nature of Teaching, cites an article on the topic by sociologist Harold Wilensky. Wilensky views the following elements (Dreeben 1970) as basic to claiming an occupation as a profession:

- a technical base of knowledge on which the occupation rests;
- an exclusive jurisdiction for the practitioners of the occupation;
- a linkage between the technical knowledge base and exclusive jurisdiction, on the one hand, and the standards of training for the profession, on the other hand;
- a conviction by the public that the services performed are uniquely trustworthy.

It is instructive to note that Wilensky makes particular reference to training as an essential element in maintaining claim to professionalism.

Training for a profession is focused, of course, on the technical knowledge base upon which the profession rests. Training involves the transmission of that knowledge base from one professional to another, or from a professional to a "professional-in-training."

Teaching is unique among those occupations claiming professional status because teachers are not only the recipients of professional training, but are also responsible for the transmission of knowledge to their students as a part of their professional duties.

This establishes another dimension to teaching and professionalism. Knowledge cannot be transmitted to another through a power relationship. The transmission of knowledge must be a free and non-coercive process. Etzioni sees autonomy as critical in this process. Because administration or management is by its very nature a power hierarchy, it is inconsistent with knowledge transmittal. A professional involved in the transmission of knowledge must be autonomous in the sense of exercising professional judgement without the fear of administrative retribution through the power hierarcy of the classic Weberian bureaucracy (Etzioni 1964). This point has interesting ramifications for the stucture of teaching, as well as for a consideration of teacher training.

In a 1970 paper, Shanker makes this same point in a somewhat different way. Using the analogy of a hospital, he states that a doctor is a professional, but so is the hospital administrator. While the administrator is a professional in hospital management, the doctor is the professional in medicine, the raison d'etre of the hospital. As a consequence, each one has clearly defined duties and responsibilities and the administrator does not interfere with the medical function of the hospital (Shanker 1970). The doctor, in other words, has professional autonomy. Shanker goes on to say that,

> A professional is not a meekly obedient person who follows orders unthinkingly. A professional person has a high degree of decision-making power within the field in which he is an expert. He is relatively unsupervised after he goes through an initial training period. He functions in a self-directed manner. (Shanker 1970, p. 139).

The practice of a field becomes a purview of a highly skilled, well

educated group of autonomous professionals who have responsibility for training in that field. These professionals have an exclusive jurisdiction over their field and the public recognizes this professional expertise and exclusive jurisdiction.

The Socio-political Environment of Teaching

It should be interesting to examine the structure and conditions of teaching to see if it meets the criteria set out above.

Schools are the creation of state and local governments, which share the responsibility and control over their funding and operation. The socio-political context of the public schools is established by the state government through laws and regulations pertaining to curriculum, teacher qualifications, reporting procedures, financial support, and other policy issues. The municipality is the politically immediate external environment for teachers (Dreeben 1970), but the municipality variable seems to exercise little influence over the basic structure and conditions of the teaching workplace. The similarity of teaching workplace from school to school even suggests that the influence of the school administration is minimal.

Teachers are hired, salaried employees who are attached to a particular organization called the school (Dreeben 1970). The teacher is physically isolated from colleagues for most, if not all, of the working day. These teachers work separately and seldom have the opportunity to have first hand knowledge and experience about what other teachers are doing. This situation mitigates against any sense of professional collegiality among teachers.

The decision-making authority of teachers over basic matters of teaching policy is minimal. Decisions over curriculum and materials are usually made elsewhere by administrators, committees, the state, or by the exigencies of scarce financial resources (Broudy 1972).

The difficult question of how to deal with the disparate needs of a diverse clientele can be both frustrating and demoralizing. Positive feedback on work done and a sense of realistic accomplishment are rare (Dreeben 1970).

The school principal is not seen as supportive or helpful. Managerial responsibilities such as budget decisions, personnel supervision and evaluation, and building control creates a gulf between the principal and the teachers (Kemble 1975).

The degree of freedom and autonomy associated with a profession is not there for teachers. In addition, teachers can be subject to infringements of their civil rights that other citizens do not experience. In some communities freedom of expression or freedom of association are abridged by those in the community. In this atmosphere professional autonomy is a myth (Shanker 1970).

In the area of training for teaching, the teacher has almost no control. Pre-service training is almost entirely in the hands of higher education with minimal supervision by the state. Those providing the training are not practicing teachers in elementary or secondary schools. In-service training, where it exists, is under the control of the school administration or a nearby college or university. Again, the practicing teacher has little input and less decision-making authority.

There are those who point out the "soft" nature of the knowledge base for teaching, citing the lack of usable and valid research on teaching. In many schools teacher training is not considered to be as academically rigorous of a program as other career preparation courses of study.

The total picture belies the assertion that teaching is a profession.

Teacher Training and Professionalism

The question becomes whether changes in teacher training programs can improve teacher preparation and enhance the professional aspects of teaching at the same time. The literature of professionalization would seem to indicate an integral connection between these two.

Lortie describes three stages of formal socialization which comprise an occupational induction system (Lortie 1975):

- Formal schooling (including general schooling and specialized schooling);
- Mediated entry;
- Learning-while-doing

Teaching as a profession ranks relatively high on the amount of formal schooling required, although not as high as some professions. It also ranks very high in learning-while-doing. Mediated entry, which includes apprenticeship, internships, medical residency, practice teaching, and other similar job preparation activities, is not that extensive in teaching. Kemble, in her three hypothetical stages of teacher development, sees the first one to two years of paid teaching as being largely learning-while-doing (Kemble 1975), while the guided elements of mediated entry are lacking.

In considering the teacher training process, Dreeben outlines

what he terms peculiar characteristics of teacher training (Dreeben 1970). These characteristics are peculiar in that they are different from the training aspects for other professions. These "peculiar characteristics" include such elements as:

- Training occurs in two stages: pre-service and in-service;
- Training takes place on a large scale for a large occupation;
- Training provides more teachers than there are positions open, but teaching has a high dropout rate;
- Teacher training institutions are not staffed by true practitioners;
- For the most part, teacher training institutions do not produce much research;
- Many teacher training institutions produce teachers through part-time programs;
- Teacher training is relatively short in duration.

Dreeben also notes that the content of teacher training programs consists mostly of helpful hints, remedies for particular situations, and practical advice. While these comprise the teaching praxis and are helpful to the prospective teacher, they are not theory based, nor are they the product of scientific inquiry. Some sociological studies also suggest that this form of training is rooted in social stratification and is designed to prevent teachers from joining the ranks of the intellectual and social elite (see Sexton 1967).

The fact of the matter is that teaching missed the wedding of higher education and the professions that took place in the United States about 1900. This was a fairly wide spread movement characterized by:

- the development of the sciences as the bases for professional training;

- the demise of apprenticeship and on-the-job training in many professions, to be replaced by university education;
- the professionalization of many occupations through added academic training;
- the reform and upgrading of professional standards;
- the addition of graduate training requirements for many professions.

Most of these trends continue to this day and result in the continuing growth of professional training on the university level (Mosher 1968). Such trends certainly offer some suggestions to the possible future direction of teacher training.

I would advance the hypothesis that reforms in teacher training and increased professionalism of teachers can, and must, go hand in hand in improving our system of schooling.

The Future of Teacher Training

In our examination of teachers and teacher preparation we have, by necessity, considered both the socio-political environment of teaching and the context of professional training. To suggest specific policy directions for the professional training of teachers, one must consider both the pre-service and in-service components together. Teacher training exists on a continuum, and any distinction will only arise out of the employment status of the individual. That is to say, the only distinction in-service education has is that it takes place after the teacher is in service. If one wanted to consider extreme reform in teacher training, all training could be pre-service, or all training could be in-service.

There is little question that teachers favor and will support new directions in teacher training. Some aspects of change in teacher

training are outlined below. They are meant to serve as a method of providing a forum for serious discussion and they deserve earnest and deep consideration.

In order to provide for professional autonomy and to give practicing teachers more control over their own profession, states should establish professional practice boards for teachers. Such boards would be made up of practicing teachers from elementary and secondary classrooms. These professional boards for teachers would set standards for teacher training and for entry into the profession. The boards would also police the profession and ensure that professional standards be met. The provision of professional autonomy would be a first step toward ensuring professionalization of teaching.

The professional training prior to entry into teaching service needs reconsideration. The substantive technical knowledge base required for teaching is two-fold: there is a teaching content knowledge base and a technical teaching or pedigogical knowledge base. These are, of course, in addition to a general intellectual background.

The first phase of teacher training would be a preparatory undergraduate program with major and secondary fields in specific content areas in the arts and sciences, business, or other areas taught in the elementary and secondary curricula. In addition, coursework might also be taken in such supportive fields as psychology, sociology, communication skills, or in professional teaching electives. For the teacher in training, this would be followed by a rigorous graduate program in professional teacher training. The content of such a program would include the technical knowledge base of the science and art of teaching as determined by the

profession and teacher educators.

Teachers already in service who choose, for one reason or another, to undergo significant retraining for a new career in a different area within teaching might repeat parts of such a graduate program. Existing professional retraining programs in law, medicine, business administration, and public administration might provide guidance in this area.

These graduate teaching programs would become centers of research on teaching and the processes of instruction. There should also be stronger linkages between these programs and elementary and secondary schools.

An integral part of the graduate professional training would be an internship. Paid teaching interns would spend at least one year in a school with a partial or full teaching load under the guidance of a practicing teacher. Together with the appropriate faculty from the graduate teacher preparation program, this guiding practitioner would assist the intern in acquiring practical knowledge and experience in teaching. Companion activities might be provided through seminars, or other activities, to place the experiences of this practicum in the conceptual and intellectual framework of the total program. An internship experience would mean that a beginning professional in teaching would already possess practical teaching experience of a high quality. Also, a feeling of collegiality would be fostered through closer relationships among teachers, interns, and graduate teacher trainers. An internship would also support the reality that teaching is a profession requiring rigorous preparation. A teacher would complete the sequence of undergraduate preparation and graduate teaching preparation including the internship with a sound academic background and the technical knowledge base of the teaching profession.

The internship provides a mediated entry into the profession.

Upon entry into the profession, the teacher would be supported in the profession by a comprehensive network of practitioner operated teacher centers. The centers would be foci for teacher professional activity; allow for development and testing of new materials, ideas, and teaching technologies; as well as offer the opportunity for continual updating of skills and knowledge and the retraining of teachers. Teacher centers would break down the isolation of teachers and, again, support the collegiality of the profession. Consultive services would be offered by the centers and teachers would have a nonthreatening, supportive environment in which to explore new answers to teaching problems. Cooperative arrangements could be developed between the teacher centers and the graduate professional programs in teaching. These two programs would support one another with each bringing its own strengths to the arrangement.

Such a comprehensive approach to teacher training would have a number of obvious and beneficial effects, including;

- recognizing teaching as a legitimate profession giving teachers more decision-making power, greater professional autonomy, and a sounder preparation for their profession;
- strengthening the intellectual base for the teaching profession;
- giving high education a clearer and more significant role in teacher training and giving professional programs in teaching the status they deserve as legitimate professional schools;
- enhancing the image of the teaching profession and increasing the public credibility of the profession.

The organizational, institutional, and socio-political barriers to such a comprehensive design for teacher training are not as great as might be imagined. Some states are already moving in the direction of

professional practices boards for teachers. The model for these exists in other professions and have a long standing tradition. Teachers are certainly organized to move rapidly in the direction of taking on the added professional responsibilities required of them. The current supply and demand situation in teaching would allow for easy transition into such a program of teacher training. Institutions of higher education would have a more clearly defined role and faculties in education and in non-education fields should welcome such a plan. The plan offers each of them a more realistic, expanded, and clarified role in the training of men and women for the teaching profession. Teacher centers offer opportunities for collaborative approaches to improve every aspect of schooling. The public and their elected representatives should welcome a system which would provide improved services and less waste.

These ideas are not new. The have been discussed, debated, studied, and written about in various forms for decades. Taken together they provide a fresh, effective, and comprehensive approach to training professionals for teaching. Teaching becomes a profession with a clearly defined jurisdiction and teachers gain professional autonomy. Teacher trainers take their rightful role as specialists in a legitimate professional field of inquiry. The intellectual and scientific base of teaching becomes stronger. Teacher training can and will be improved with a concomitant improvement in the quality of teaching. The ideas set forth in this discussion deserve serious consideration in bringing about such an improvement.

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